The Netflix Effect

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We all have those television shows that we cannot get enough of and are constantly putting off responsibilities and bedtime just to watch one more episode. We all have had those Saturday nights where instead of going out with your friends, you stay at home and watch Netflix in bed. There is something about the importance of social television viewing practices and new expectations about the availability of commercial-free, high quality, and original television content that young viewers cannot get enough of (Matrix, 2014). Statistics have proven that Gen Y (currently aged eighteen to thirty-four) and Gen Z (young people born after 2005) are using not only Netflix, but also a variety of video streaming and delivery services to binge watch TV shows (Matrix, 2014). Binge watching is defined as the practice of watching multiple episodes of a television program in rapid succession, typically by means of digital streaming. Some of these services include: Hulu, Amazon Prime, MTV, Nickelodeon, and Disney. As Toronto Star, Raju Mudhar stated, “Entertainment is fast becoming an all-you-can-eat buffet. Call it the Netflix effect” (Mudhar, 2014, p.1). Teens today, should have a limit on the amount of hours spent watching Netflix or any other video streaming service in order to decrease depression, loneliness and self-regulation deficiency and increase more personal face to face interactions and relationships.

“We have been amazed at how quickly kids have embraced this new technology. We’re talking billons of minutes spent watching” (Kanter, 2014, p.2).” The Netflix Effect article shows the magnitude of amount of time spent watching streamed movies, starting from as young as a toddler. Binge watching has become increasingly popular more and more over the years (Matrix, 2014). “A recent study by MarketCast concluded that viewers aged eighteen to twenty-nine are most likely to engage in binge viewing. In fact,
67% of television viewers aged thirteen to forty-nine admit to TV bingeing at least sometimes” (Yorio, 2014, p. 125). Statistics show teens are watching certain shows not only because they are interested in them, but also because it gives them a certain social status (Matrix, 2014). For example, if all of their friends are all watching a certain show, there is pressure to keep up so that the person can feel included in the group; engaging in conversations about the show and gives them something in common. A big impact of binge watching is no commercials (Matrix, 2014). With no commercials, you are retaining more content of the show, and therefore it encourages more binge watching. Another addicting factor to binge watching is how emotionally involved viewers become with the show they are watching (Matrix, 2014). This postpones the viewer’s real world situations, problems and responsibilities. One example of this circumstance as explained by Stuti Arora “I tend to stress watch TV like people stress eat” (Tao, 2013, p. 5). Today tots and teens live in a world where if you want an episode or show, it is easily accessible (Matrix, 2014). They have the expectations that any program they want to watch should be given to them. As Tara Sorensen, head of original programing at Amazon Studios, told the New York Times “kids live in an on-demand world and expect to find their shows not just on TV but everywhere else: online, mobile, and VOD” (Stelter, 2013, p.131).

The Deadline Article focuses on the negative effects of binge watching. “Even though some people argue that binge watching is a harmless addiction, findings from our study suggest that binge watching should no longer be viewed this way”, said Yoon Hi Sung (The Deadline Team, 2015). Some people have said that binge watching television shows is a type of therapy for them, although that might be so, laying in your bed watching episodes on end is not a healthy way to deal with their real world problems
(The Deadline Team, 2015). If anything it makes it worse, because eventually they will have to deal with these issues. Correlations have been shown with impulsivities in binge watching (The Deadline Team, 2015). People who can’t control themselves and suffer from depression are more likely to binge watch (The Deadline Team, 2015). Studies have shown, people who abuse and struggle with binge-watching have no self control and are constantly letting the next episode auto-roll when they should be spending their time more productively (Begley, 2015). Health problems, such as obesity and physical fatigue are other causes for concern while binge watching, as told by Wei-Na Lee (The Deadline Team, 2015). The deadline article points out that loneliness, depression and self-regulation deficiency has a big impact in any binge behavior in general (The Deadline Team, 2015). Therefore, binge watching television shows on Netflix should not be viewed any different. Sung said “When binge-watching become rampant, viewers may start to neglect their work and their relationships with others” (cited by The Deadline Team, 2015).

Being addicted to binge watching on Netflix is not a healthy habit and should not be taken as lightly as it is today. If Netflix or any other video streaming service would put commercials back in the television shows, it would decrease binge watching; viewers would not be as engaged and it would take them a longer time to finish an episode/season. Another factor to decreasing binge watching is to not make shows as easily accessible. If video-streaming services would only put up a certain amount of shows, some teens may not be interested in watching those shows, thus forcing them to carry on with responsibilities. With adding commercials between television shows and services making shows harder to access, it will decrease the time spent on binge
watching. Therefore, it will compel teens struggling with depression, loneliness and self-regulation deficiency to be more personable and interact face to face as well as increasing their relationships with others.

References